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STATE LEGISLATURE, MADRAS

THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, the 20th February 1959.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at eleven of the clock, the Deputy Chairman (SRI A. M. ALLAPICHAI) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS

Government Holidays

* 81 *Q.*—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM: Will the Hon. the Chief Minister be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any communication has been received from the Government of India in the matter of the reduction in the number of Government holidays in public offices and institutions; and

(*b*) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN (on behalf of the Hon. the Chief Minister): (*a*) & (*b*) No communication has been received recently from the Government of India in the matter of reduction in the number of Government holidays in public offices and institutions. However, in the year 1948 the Government of India addressed the Provincial Governments, suggesting the abolition of sectional or communal holidays, and to avoid any wide discrepancy between the Central Government and the Provincial Governments in the total number of holidays. They also emphasized that closed holidays should always be for occasions of general interest and not of significance to a particular communities. After a careful consideration of the foregoing, this State Government ordered the abolition of all sectional holidays and fixed the list of holidays to be granted at 23 per year, excluding Sundays and the penultimate Saturdays of each month. These holidays are being granted every year, with certain slight modifications considered necessary from time to time.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM: Even if there is no reduction in the number of holidavs, will the Government consider the question of scrutinising how far these general holidays are necessary on the specific occasions on which the holidays are granted at present and will the Government consider the revision of the list as this list was prepared some time ago as stated by the Hon. Minister?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: It is my personal feeling that we have more holidays in this country than in any other country in the world.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM: In view of the answer of the Hon. Minister, may I request the Government to take up the question now and see how far reduction in the number of holidays could be made?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: It is always a very difficult thing to do.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN: Is it the opinion of the Hon. Minister that it compares very favourably with foreign countries in the matter of holidays?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Absolutely certain.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY: May I know, Sir, what is meant by 'sectional holidays'?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Previously we were granting holidays to Hindus for certain Hindu festivals, to Muslims for certain Muslim festivals and so on. They were sectional holidays.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM: What steps do the Government propose to take to give effect to the view expressed by the Hon. the Leader of the House on behalf of the Government?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Already so far as industrial labour is concerned, we have passed the National and Festival Holidays Act whereby we have restricted the number of holidays to seven.

SRI A. GAJAPATHY NAYAGAR: Sir, how many holidays are granted to Hindus and how many to Christians?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: To-day there are no sectional holidays. We have uniform holidays for everybody.

SRI A. GAJAPATHY NAYAGAR: How many holidays are set apart for Hindus, Christians and Muslims? How many holidays are set apart in a year for these communities?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Holidays have not been set apart for them. If the hon. Member wants to know how many of these 23 holidays are for Hindu festivals, how many for Muslim festivals, etc., then I can give the information.

SRI A. GAJAPATHY NAYAGAR: In that light, will the Hon. Minister answer the question?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN: The Hindu festivals for which holidays are granted are Vaikunta Ekadesi, Bhogi, Pongal, Mattu Pongal, Mahasivarathri, Telugu New Year's Day, Tamil New Year's Day, Avani Avittam, Sri Jayanti, Vinayaka Chathurthi, Malaya Amavasai, Ayudha Pooja and Deepavali.

The Muslim festivals for which holidays are granted are Ramzan, Bakrid, Muharram and Meeladi Nabi.

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SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY : Do not the Government think that Sri Rama Navami should be a public holiday especially as the Father of the Nation wanted Ram Rajya to be established?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : That goes against the general principle which I have enunciated, not to increase the number of holidays.

Slum clearance

*82 Q.—SRI V. V. RAMASWAMI : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of India have increased the subsidy to the States for slum clearance work; and

(b) if so, the amount of the subsidy proposed to be given?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At present, Slum Clearance Schemes are eligible for assistance as follows :—

Loan 50 per cent of cost by Government of India.

Subsidy 25 per cent of cost by Government of India.

Subsidy 25 per cent of cost by the State Government.

The Central subsidy of 25 per cent of the cost given by the Government of India to the States is likely to be increased to $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the cost. But no official communication has been received in this behalf.

SRI M. ETHIRAJALU : சேரி ஒழிப்பு சம்பந்தமாகக் கொடுக்கப்படும் உதவித் தொகை நகரத்திற்கு மட்டிலும் செலவழிக்கப்படுகிறதா, அல்லது மாநிலத்திலுள்ள எல்லா ஜில்லாக்களிலும் செலவழிக்கபபடுகிறதா ?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : இந்த ஸ்லம் கிளியரன்ஸ் ஸ்கீம், இரண்டாவது ஐந்தாண்டுத் திட்டத்தில் இருப்பது சென்னை நகரத்திற்கு மட்டும்தான்.

SRI V. V. RAMASWAMI : குடிசை வாழ் மக்களுக்குக் கொடுக்கப்படும் வீடுகளுக்கு வாடகை அதிகமாக இருப்பதால், அதைக் குறைப்பதற்கு ஒரு சட்டம் இயற்ற வேண்டுமென்று மத்திய சர்க்காரிடமிருந்து ஏதாவது யோசனை வந்திருக்கிறதா ? அவர்கள் அரசியலமைப்பின் 31-வது பிரிவைத் திருத்தியிருப்பதால், அதையொட்டி மாநிலங்களும் சட்டமியற்றலாம் என்று சொல்லியிருக்கிறார்களா ? அது விஷயமாக என்ன நடவடிக்கை எடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறது ?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : பொதுவாக, சென்னை ராஜ்யம் பூராவிலும் அமுல் நடத்தக்கூடிய ஒரு ஸ்லம் கிளியரன்ஸ் சட்டம் செய்யலாம் என்பது யோசனையில் இருந்துகொண்டு வருகிறது.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : How is it that on the one hand, the Government have got a number of policies, schemes, plans and so many other things for slum clearance and that on the other hand, we see in the City of Madras more slums springing up every now and then?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : That is because of the influx of population into Madras City.